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Posted: Thurs., May 27, 2004, 10:00pm PT

F/x shop offers makeovers

Hydraulx opens Lola for cosmetic enhancement

By [MARC GRASER](#)

Thesps may soon take advantage of a process that allows them to undergo a digital makeover when appearing in a film.

Hydraulx, the Santa Monica-based visual effects shop that recently completed major sequences for Fox's "The Day After Tomorrow," has opened the doors to Lola, a digital cosmetic enhancement biz that helps celebrities remove blemishes or alter their weight when appearing onscreen through the use of computers.

While Lola has made a name for itself in the musicvideo and commercials world, working on such singers as Celine Dion, Britney Spears, Jennifer Lopez and Beyonce, facility has begun expanding into features.

Lola is currently working on Revolution Studios laffer "White Chicks," helping transform Marlon and Shawn Wayans from FBI agents into fair-skinned blond debutantes as they go undercover to thwart a kidnapping.

Lola's artists enhanced the prosthetic work the film's makeup crew had created for the Wayans to wear, removing creases created by facial expressions and smoothing bulges formed by facial hair underneath.

"The makeup artists did a fantastic job on the set," said Lola partner and chief of digital surgery Edson Williams, but director Keenan Ivory Wayans "wanted us to enhance the believability of the disguises."

Company has also worked on actors in "Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines" and "Looney Tunes: Back in Action." Technology was first tested on Eddie Murphy in "The Nutty Professor" for which Lola's artists added bulk to Murphy's character.

"We don't have too many clients who ask us to make them fatter or uglier," said Greg Strause, a founding partner of Hydraulx and Lola.

Not surprisingly, Lola's founders have had a hard time getting the word out about what their company can do, given that clients don't want it

known what kind of work was digitally done to them. Lola's offices are separated from Hydraulx to give clients more privacy.

Lola has been used to make male and female celebs look photorealistically younger, thinner and more muscular. Shop's also removed scars, birthmarks, facial hair, pimples, wrinkles and dimples, done digital tummy tucks and removed bags under eyes. Costs range from \$10,000 for a musicvid to \$400,000 for a film, depending on the work requested.

The technology is beginning to appeal to more thesps, considering that "for a lot of people, this can be career-lengthening," Strause said.

Lola is one of few companies offering digital cosmetic enhancements, but the growing use of effects in films and other digital production methods could change that, creating a competitish.

That's especially true considering that HDTV and DVD's coming replacement produces high-resolution images sharper than those on television or on prints in theaters.

"You're going to see every detail," Strause said. "It's unforgiving."

On the traditional effects front, Hydraulx completed 110 shots for "The Day After Tomorrow." It is currently creating sequences for Warner Bros.' supernatural thriller "Constantine."

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